

## Message Text

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43

ACTION AF-18

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FM AMCONSUL DURBAN

TO SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 1493

INFO AMEMBASSY LONDON

AMEMBASSY PRETORIA

AMCONSUL CAPE TOWN

AMCONSUL JOHANNESBURG

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CAPE TOWN ALSO FOR EMBASSY

E. O. 11652: N/ A

TAGS: SOCI, SF

SUBJECT: DURBAN MAYOR DENIES ALLEGATIONS RE BILLY GRAHAM

REF: DURBAN 125

1. MAYOR OF DURBAN RON WILLIAMS HAS CALLED CONGEN TO DENY EMPHATICALLY THAT HE HAS EVER CHARGED DR. BILLY GRAHAM WITH "STEALING FUNDS" FROM AMOUNTS COLLECTED DURING HIS MASS RALLY IN DURBAN MARCH 17. CALL RESULTED FROM MAYOR'S UNDESTANDING THAT U. K. AND U. S. MEDIA ARE ALLEGEDLY FEATURING SUCH CHARGES, PRESUMABLY AS RESULT APRIL 8 DURBAN SUNDAY TRIBUNE ARTICLE (BEING POUCHED) IN WHICH MAYOR CRITICIZED ORGANIZERS OF BILLY GRAHAM RALLY FOR FAILING TO MAKE GENEROUS CONTRIBUTION TO MAYORAL RELIEF FUND FOR VICTIMS OF MARCH 16 INDIAN MARKET FIRE WHICH HE HAD EXPECTED.

2. AT BEGINNING OF MARCH 17 RALLY, CHAIRMAN OF LOCAL ORGANIZING COMMITTEE, REV. N. S. HUDSON, ANNOUNCED THAT CONGRESS ON MISSION AND EVANGELISM (DURBAN A-32) WHICH WAS THEN TAKING PLACE IN DURBAN AND WHICH HAD INVITED DR. GRAHAM TO COME TO THIS CITY, HAD OPENED A FUND FOR RELIEF OF VICTIMS OF FIRE WHICH

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HAD LARGELY DESTROYED INDIAN MARKET IN DURBAN PRECEDING NIGHT. NEAR END OF RALLY AND FOLLOWING DR. GRAHAM'S ADDRESS, ANOTHER MEMBER OF LOCAL ORGANIZING COMMITTEE ASKED FOR CONTRIBUTIONS FROM AUDIENCE TO HELP DEFRAY EXPENSES OF RALLY.

3. ALTHOUGH TWO ITEMS WERE NOT LINKED, MAYOR AND POSSIBLY SOME OTHERS MISTAKENLY THOUGHT PART OF CONTRIBUTIONS COLLECTED AT RALLY WOULD BE GIVEN TO MAYORAL RELIEF FUND. THIS BELIEF WAS STRENGTHENED WHEN ORGANIZING COMMITTEE SUBSEQUENTLY ANNOUNCED THAT R11,000 HAD BEEN COLLECTED, R2000 MORE THAN NEEDED TO COVER EXPENSES. GIFT TO RELIEF FUND BY ORGANIZING COMMITTEE OF ONLY R100, PLUS R500 FROM CONGRESS ON MISSION AND EVANGELISM, PROMPTED MAYOR'S STRONG CRITICISM IN SUNDAY TRIBUNE.

3. COMMENT: MAYOR'S PIQUE OVER SMALL DONATION TO HIS RELIEF FUND UNDOUBTEDLY HEIGHTENED BY PITIFUL RESPONSE HIS FUND HAS ENGENDERED FROM DURBAN PUBLIC THUS FAR. IN ADDITION, FAILURE OF DURBAN CITY COUNCIL TO GIVE ANY RELIEF TO INDIAN FIRE VICTIMS OR TO PROVIDE ALTERNATIVE FACILITIES FOR RUINED STALL HOLDERS DESPITE NUMEROUS MEETINGS ON SUBJECT HAS RESULTED IN INCREASING CRITICISM FROM INDIAN COMMUNITY, GROWING POLITICAL FLAK FOR MAYOR AND SAG INTERVENTION IN SITUATION. THIS MAY HELP ACCOUNT FOR INTEMPERANCE OF MAYOR'S REMARKS TO PRESS RE BILLY GRAHAM, FOR WHICH HE NOW SEEMS REPENTANT.

HOLMES

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\*\*\* Current Handling Restrictions \*\*\* n/a

\*\*\* Current Classification \*\*\* LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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